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The Army and the Nation

IT IS SAID by many people these days and rather ineffectively denied by others that the morale of our soldiers is distressingly poor. The men complain that they are learning nothing from officers who know nothing themselves, consequently that they are wasting their time under extremely irritating circumstances and that they would like therefore, and in many cases intend, to throw up the job and go home. Assuming the existence of real discontent, and not simply the traditional complaint of men subjected to routine discipline, two questions arise. The first is a technical question: to what extent was the army unprepared to receive and train such a high number of men, and therefore is now training them badly? The question must be asked by the nation and must be answered. But the army itself may be counted on to seek a remedy for whatever technical deficiencies exist—in its own interest and in response to public opinion. If it cannot or does not do so, we shall have simply a bad and ineffective instrument for national defense or war.

The second question involves the essential difficulty of preparing a democracy's army for eventual war. To what extent is the unrest among the trainees attributable to more profound causes, such as indifference to the objectives of a war they may be called upon to fight, cynicism as to the danger their government informs them exists? Ours is no army of mercenaries. We are, proudly,

an undisciplined people asking questions. Unless we find answers to these questions, our soldiers—the projection of our national will—must remain reluctant individuals subjected to what they can only view as unnatural regimentation. No technical training can compensate the deficient will.

Just suppose there were no war, no Hitler, no question of war, nor any possibility of war, nothing beyond any seas but calm islands peopled by the creations of dreams—Rousseau's and Tiepolo's— islands and continents providing exotic nourishment to natives agile in the dance, friendly, contented, quaint. Then would the spectacle be absurd of over a million American men withdrawn from their accustomed enterprises, learning ritual steps and gestures, living in an obligatory community of boredom, firing giant firecrackers as if arrested in development on some fatal Fourth of July, aiming searchlights into the empty skies with no hope even of an answer from Mars or the moon. Then would such men—our soldiers—be lunatics or slaves, parading for the private amusement of some sardonic despot.

But there is no use supposing. The world, all the world, has been discovered. America must plot its course. Until it does, improved army leadership and such efforts as those of the USO will act as palliatives to the unrest: they cannot abolish it.

The Roosevelt-Churchill Eight Points

MANY of the ideas in the new "8 points" have a familiar ring. Among these are the principles of self-determination and disarmament. Where the present statement goes beyond the Wilson peace program is in the well-hedged aspirations for the access of all to trade and raw materials and the general objective of freedom from fear and want. A much greater difference between the two is the lack of any territorial provisions to implement the principles outlined. It must not be overlooked that this is an effort to hold out to the peoples of the world an alternative to the new order advocated by the axis. Once again the United States is making the gesture at playing a leading rôle in the field of international relations with little guarantee that she will continue it once the tension has subsided. And there is no new world organization outlined in which the United States is to play her part.

Circumstances doubtless had most to do with the vagueness of this historic Anglo-American pronouncement. What is disquieting is the emphasis on restoring the *status quo* embodied in the new 8 points, if they are to be regarded as more than a series of noble aspirations. They seem too exclusively conceived in terms of the world as it once was, too oblivious of the fact that modern capitalism will never again have the character it did in the twenties and thirties. They

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fail to make allowance for the fact that the world is at a turning point, and that it is undergoing a revolution—not, to be sure, what axis leaders mean by that term—but the ending of nineteenth century colonial exploitation, of expansion of mass production, of seeming national economic independence and many other things. Obviously, however, the attempt to restore the *status quo* with slight modifications holds out some hope to the world; the “new order” holds out none.

The Long War

WHETHER you want the axis to win, or England, there is one desolating aspect to modern war: it is in a sense self-perpetuating. It is hard to conceive that any decent man should not want peace, yet can a statesman today in practice allow himself to want peace in any but academic fashion? After a nation's economy has been geared to war, dare it risk peace before that war has run a considerable course? Americans are told it may be two years more, Italians, eight or ten. Two years—or eight or ten—before the inevitable dislocations of putting national economy back on a peace basis, before millions of men lose their jobs in tank, airplane, powder, uniform, rifle, machine-gun factories. Even too rapid a victory could conceivably not be desirable, for what misery would come out of it? Enough, even, to sweep the New Deal from power, despite patronage, despite waves of the future. Such thoughts, and even statesmen cannot help having them, make villains of us all. We—all of us—fear economic crises even more than death, even more than dishonor.

American Catholics of German Origin

THE CONVENTION of the Central Verein deserves mention every year because of the quality of that organization and its splendid work and history, and this year (the organization's eighty-sixth) there is additional reason to greet it because of the war. The Central Verein, and its women's division, the National Catholic Women's Union, are made up of American Catholics of German origin. While the war spirit advances, it is increasingly necessary to recognize the values brought to America from Germany and the soundness of the citizenship of so many of our countrymen of German ancestry. The Central Verein's position is unusually strong for any American organization which is based in part on a consciousness of the European origins of its members. Founded before our own Civil War and the unification of Germany, never having had any affiliations in Germany at all, this organization is not likely to suffer the suspicions that one would expect to be visited on an organization with a German name. It progressed right through the World

War and continued to add to its activities and broaden its usefulness. It should continue to do so through the present period of enmity toward Germany. The importance of the Central Verein for the whole country has been its integral Catholicism, and its firm conception of our religion as a social religion with necessary implications in group life as well as private. Speaking before the convention, Archbishop Stritch voiced a critical warning against purely statist action by which the total job of conducting life is taken over by the government. The Central Verein has always seriously studied and practically promoted intermediary social organization and life between the individual and the state. The family, labor organizations, farmers' organizations have been emphasized. Credit unions, maternity guilds, training groups have been developed, and parochial schools. An active, creative and unifying Catholicism has been the objective. . . . Incidentally, no resolutions about the war emanated from the convention. A strong speech against the trend of American war involvement, sharply adverse to the administration, was delivered; occasional remarks also indicated opposition to involvement.

Democracy in Union Halls

FATHER EDWARD DOWLING, S.J., old friend of Heywood Broun, member of a CIO union, former newspaper man, recently addressed the Summer School of Catholic Action at Fordham University, urging the “democratization of labor unions.” Father Dowling touched on a very sore spot in American labor organization. The greater the power of the unions, the more essential that their leadership have the confidence of and reflect their rank and file. Undoubtedly there are many unions in which this is—and has long been—the case. There are many where it is not.

What are some of the worst abuses? Racial discrimination is one. Another is the rigging of elections, so that only persons acceptable to the powers that be are nominated for office. Another is the use of the grievance board (and the threat of suspension from membership) as a club to ensure subservience in union politics. Another is the constant milking of members to secure greater and greater revenues—both by disproportionately high dues and initiation fees and by “suggesting” the purchase of buttons, books, magazines.

A number of lines of reform have been suggested. At present unions have the legal status of “voluntary associations.” This means that, unlike corporations, they cannot be sued as corporate bodies (though their officers and individual members can be sued as individuals). There has therefore been a strong advocacy of enforced legal incorporation. To this there is a valid union objection, that it would make possible the destruction of unions by endless expensive litigation, insti-

tuted by employers in order to ruin the unions financially. There has likewise been a clamor for the enforced publication of financial statements, and for governmental regulation of union affairs, analogous to the regulation exercised over insurance companies, railroads, the stock exchange. All these proposals presume that the unions are to be kept to some straight and narrow path by exclusively *outside* pressures.

Most proposals for reform conceive of government as exercising a direct, managerial function. There is another aspect of government (and particularly of law) under which government establishes certain standards, and then offers means of redress when a citizen wishes redress against violation of these standards. Suppose, then, that the governmental problems of a union are analogous to those of the state; that certain institutions which experience has shown promote justice and discourage tyranny could fruitfully be applied to any organized social group in which individual interests often come into conflict. Unions have to have constitutions, rules of procedure. These could be so formulated as to reduce occasions for injustice to a minimum. Why should not a union's constitution and by-laws first of all be subject to close and learned scrutiny by some impartial body before that union may function as a legal entity?

General standards would, of course, have to be formulated—a sort of “bill of rights” for the rank and file. They could be based on experience of abuses (as was the Bill of Rights) rather than on thin-spun theorizing. Thus they might include: an inalienable right of nomination to office, lodged in the membership itself, and subject to no veto; a quorum system designed to discourage “wear them out” tactics at meetings; some restriction on the jurisdictional and penal powers of grievance committees; the elimination of all entrance requirements based on political, racial or religious grounds. Some judicial process would then have to be set up whereby individual members could secure redress, and wherein breaches of constitutionality could be adjudicated—all this with maximum guarantees against personal reprisals.

It may be argued that to make any such requirements of unions smacks of fascism. Yet that the government should offer protection and redress to bank depositors against dishonest management has never been called fascism. Why then would it be fascism to attempt to guarantee the union rank and file an opportunity to exercise the privileges generally assumed to be those of members of *voluntary* associations?

This idea is proposed in no sense as a platform, but merely as matter for discussion, as a possible line toward solution of one of our most pressing social problems. The State of New York has already taken a step in this direction by outlawing racial discrimination in union constitutions and by-laws; what is here suggested is merely an exten-

sion of the same principle, along lines characteristic of our whole civil history as a nation.

The Partisan Approach to War

AMERICA'S part in the war is a life and death question debated with increasingly partisan narrowness and hardness by an increasing number of fellow citizens. The partisanship does not appear for political parties or personal advantage, at least deliberately and consciously. It is an “unselfish” partisanship, and perhaps that isn't a good word at all, but more and more people are looking at the war and what everyone does and says about the war from a fixed angle of frozen judgment or prejudice, and their emotional reactions are grooved so that new events are not conscientiously used as material for more adequate analysis and judgment. What happens now automatically goes into the old subjective rut, deepening it but not altering its form or direction. This natural partisanship is psychologically tempting because it simplifies one's mind and emotions and the aspect of a complicated and uncomfortable world, because it is warming and because it even encourages fun and wit, although of a contemptuous and uncharitable sort. This partisanship also fits too well with the accepted method of public and political action.

In private dealings and in national we are accustomed to the bargaining, zigzag, or compromise method of obtaining joint action. Extreme claims are made with the expectation that a compromise can be reached in practice. If a trend is to be changed 5 degrees, then aim your claims, assertions, accusations at 180. Much of the partisan statement about America and the war is not true. Many of the partisan feelings and opinions expressed are so extreme, blind and over-simplified that the people identified with them would repudiate them in a cool and slow and searching discussion. But these extreme claims and statements and proposals do influence the trend of action.

The point has been reached where you have to make a choice between a practical effort to influence action toward what you consider the best, or an attempt to see and express as close as you can get to the truth. Probably great numbers believe the lies and absurdities and crazy policies propounded by the extreme propagandists and partisans in connection with the war. That is another reason why the dialectical process of political action is bad. The compromise is missed. History seems to go from extreme to extreme, scrupulously avoiding the desirable synthesis and golden mean. The partisanship which makes a man seem strong and decisive and a practical worker in public affairs is clearly a great cause of the historical jumps from one evil to its opposite evil, as well as a reason why the morality of means is cut off from ends, and truth is neglected.

The Death of a Frenchman

A Socialist politician
who died a hero.

By Jean Weiller

In France's general catastrophe more than a year ago it was natural that the heroism of individuals should have escaped notice and that little echo of such should have come to American ears. For some time Frenchmen in France have begun to speak of their heroes in this war, and the article which follows pay tribute to such a one; it rectifies a picture of corruption and inefficiency which a score of recent books has painted in all too vivid colors, and to the exclusion of fine things thought and done. Leo Lagrange was not a Catholic, although he was the recipient of a Papal decoration for work in connection with the Vatican Pavilion at the Paris Exposition (1937).—The Editors.

AFTER a certain length of time, it becomes very difficult to cope with even the most mendacious of legends; news filters through too sparsely, precise information is lacking; we become accustomed, wrongly no doubt, but nevertheless we do become accustomed to conventional judgments, ceaselessly repeated: what truth such judgments have, and which we all, often despite ourselves, seek, makes us forget the gross falsifications on which they are based. Thus have arisen the summary judgments concerning the general lack of heroism in the French people, the general lack of the spirit of sacrifice in the defenders of democracy. Therefore the example of Leo Lagrange, Socialist member of parliament, former minister in the governments of Blum and Chautemps, who died heroically at the Battle of Aisne in June, 1940, should not be forgotten. The lines which follow have as their sole object to emphasize the sacrifice he freely made, the dangers he resolutely accepted, his willingness to take the consequences of his ideas.

To do this, I must attempt to describe the true personality of a man who, if he had lived, would certainly not have turned into a humdrum careerist, but—in the opinion of opponents as well as friends—would have played a most important rôle in the political life of his country. Surely such a man had a sense of personal responsibility developed to the highest point, and a sense—for himself as well as for others—of the duties requisite for the protection of human dignity. He thought that “in assuming a maximum of risk he could afford an example to an era in which too

many betrayals sought to justify themselves by a debased ‘pacifism’ . . .” There is perhaps still time to profit by his example, to fulfill so high a purpose.

At least we can now no longer read without bitter scorn such words as those which M. Jacques Chardonne dared to write in the days after the defeat (“Private History of the Year 1940”): “Those heroes, always boiling over with national honor, who blushed for France at the time of Munich, when there was a chance for peace, and who until last year preached such fine sermons on nobility, look sad indeed in the brilliant light of the defeat. For force is the thing that counts . . .”

The death of Lagrange was not an accident; he was one of “those heroes.” He believed in the conduct of all those who, like himself, underwent the dangers of a terrible war and accepted the risk of death simply because they understood that the cause to be defended was worth the sacrifice of individuals; understanding this, he said it to others and, having said it to others, he wished to be with them in the firing lines. And not to pretend, moreover, not to make a gesture, but to be constantly, simply, good-temperedly, with them, like them.

That was why, when his turn came, he quietly reported at Vannes, where his mobilization papers called him; refusing to take advantage of the fact (though his chiefs drew it to his attention) that a member of parliament who was 39 years old and had been a volunteer at the age of 17 in the last war could without fear of dishonor devote himself to other duties.

Thus it happened that this former Under-Secretary of State for the Organization of Leisure and Sport, whose financially ill-supported work (astonishing as it may seem in a day when the expression “leisure” provoked such easy scorn) had called forth nothing but praise, especially from young people, refused the invitation tendered to him by Daladier's cabinet to undertake once again the organization of physical education. He was tempted, no doubt, but he did not hesitate. His vocation was elsewhere.

As a non-commissioned artillery officer, he trained with some other members of parliament at the School of Poitiers, and came out at the head of the group. But he did not believe that thus to have earned his officer's stripes was enough.

No more than he had considered his experience sufficient reason to be content with a civil post, did he now feel moved to make use of the knowledge and connections he had acquired as secretary of the Committee on the Army in the Chamber of Deputies in order to secure a headquarters job. He requested that he be sent to the front as a liaison officer in a light artillery regiment, a regiment of shock troops, the sixty-first of Metz, which had a glorious past, and had won the "fourragère rouge" during the war of 1914. It was now stationed on the Lorraine front. When the breakthrough came, he was ordered to one of the most exposed positions. It was while he was fighting on the Aisne line that Leo Lagrange "disappeared": he had volunteered for a dangerous mission; he was believed to have been slightly wounded and taken prisoner during the German attack. For many months, his wife and son could learn no more.

Slowly the pieces of evidence began to fit together. . . . One escaped officer described the purpose of the mission for which Lagrange had volunteered. . . . A non-commissioned officer admitted not having tried to find his lieutenant, since there was "so much smoke in the valley that it was impossible to see anything five yards away." . . . In January came the report, to our sorrow completely convincing, of a priest who had also escaped from Germany: at the time when he was taken prisoner, June 11 or 12, a German soldier told him how "an officer, formerly a cabinet minister," had been buried with solemn rites—"one Leo La . . . We found on him minister's identification papers." "When I gave the full name, Lagrange," added the priest, "the soldier exclaimed, 'That's right, and we put flowers on his grave.'" Highest, and yet painful, homage paid by the conqueror to the quality of the conquered.

For a long time the flower-covered tomb, which captured soldiers thought they remembered seeing not far from the Suippe, was searched for. In fact it was near a village on the banks of the Aisne—the farthest goal of his mission. Perhaps he had sought to fulfill this mission in spite of the violent artillery fire, in spite of the imminent German attack; perhaps he had been wounded and taken away by the Germans when they had found him. . . .

The grave is found

On February 17 in a very discreet and brief statement, the magazine *Auto* (a paper devoted to sport) confirmed the death of the former Under-Secretary of State for Sport and Physical Education (his title in the Chautemps cabinet). His tomb had been found, and it was at Evergnicourt, Aisne.

It was this statement that the whole press copied. For it wished to pay homage to the valor

of this former minister, whose quiet courage and cordial simplicity had been valued both by his companions in arms and also by all those with whom he had had dealings in civil life. And this was so, even though he had been a minister of the Popular Front, and had accepted a cabinet post which had been so ridiculed in France under a democratic régime, because it had been called (perhaps inopportunistly, in view of the approaching war) "Ministry of Leisure," but which had been so praised elsewhere—particularly in Germany, where it was called "Strength through Joy." It was officially the "Under-Secretaryship of State for the Organization of Leisure and Sport." Lagrange would have preferred "Under-Secretariat of State for Youth," a name since adopted.* But he was proud of having been the first called to try to work in the direction which he believed corresponded to the most legitimate aspirations of the workers in this country: more joy and more dignity. If he put the emphasis on "sport," it was because he knew that through this means only could he accomplish useful work rapidly.

More than a sportsman

All this is too summary; it deserves longer treatment. But one primary point must be underlined. People wanted to pay tribute to the "Minister of Sport," and to him only—and many believed they were thus giving him full measure. But, for all who had known Lagrange, it was a travesty of the truth. Lagrange, certainly, was not an "intellectual" in the ordinary sense of the word; he was above all a man of action, with an eye to results; but one in whom constant thought ever guided decision and action. As a young man, he had come out at the head of the diplomatic class in the Ecole des Sciences Politiques. He had been a brilliant law student. Then when he began his legal career, he was made Secretary of the Bar Association. So he had early felt his political vocation; and, as he did not take lightly the personal responsibility which he felt socialism imposed upon him—a responsibility which he had seen, well in advance of the tardy disciples of Péguy, to consist in a certain acceptance of poverty—he gave himself entirely to political action and did nothing to further himself financially. He was an orator rather than a writer—but it was rather in private conversation, or when only a few were present, that one discovered the full play of his thought: vigorous, clear, faithful to the pre-eminent worth of one's own personal example among men, as to the ideas which they support, the means they use. He had been a man of "sport" by reason of the job which had been given him, and that was, indeed, a triumph of the spirit.

Doubtless the left-wing press could not do more

* At present writing the Pétain general commissioner for Youth is tennis player Jean Borotra.

than barely cast timidity aside where he himself had shown the colors of bright courage. They therefore gratefully reprinted the article, itself courageous, which appeared in the *Petit Provençal* of February 18:

We bow before the tomb of this hero with mixed feelings of sorrow and pride. We see again the bright young eyes of this great sportsman, those eyes that held the sombre light which we know today foretold the fate of this brave man. Leo Lagrange was truly a sportsman in the full sense of the word. He considered the leisure he gave his generation merely the means of making his countrymen stronger and more athletic through physical exercise. When France called upon him to play his part, he chose the most dangerous post. There he remained. This brave man is indeed to be honored. France does not question those who have died for her as to the ideal upon which their patriotism was based. This ideal must have been pure, since it inspired Leo Lagrange to make the supreme sacrifice. An ample harvest of brave men such as he was will spring from his example. And that alone will be a suitable return for the seed he sowed.

Only a man like Maurras was free to talk in terms of politics. That is why his article of February 20 particularly deserves notice. There is nothing essentially mistaken in this article as far as Lagrange himself is concerned. As the weekly *Temps Nouveaux* of February 26 put it, M. Charles Maurras honors himself in honoring Leo Lagrange. . . . "Let us ignore the insults to others, and the choice of language. It would not have displeased Lagrange to hear this: 'Leo Lagrange, having desired the war, has fought, and fought well. He did not return. We salute him.'"

He himself, who was so deeply human, knew that a fierce will to resist was termed "war-mongering," and he had for a long time accepted the risks latent in this dangerous designation—particularly dangerous in the France of our day, where it was so easy to take advantage of the completely pacific spirit of the French people. He had for a long time known of the danger from his own party.

On this point, indeed, as on many others, one cannot accuse him of a lack of clarity. As a former secretary of the Army Committee in the Chamber of Deputies, he was quickly converted to the ideas of Colonel de Gaulle, and was one of the rare politicians to become a firm supporter of the largely motorized professional army.

After Munich

His resolute attitude after Munich, when many sincere people hesitated to disavow this gesture of appeasement, determined his conduct. This M. Maurras thoroughly understood. And therein, beyond any doubt, lay the true courage of the man. Brave, perhaps a little the sportsman, who would preserve the joy of life even in the face of death, he was above all courageous with the courage of a man who had a sense of his responsibilities and of his personal vocation. It is moving to re-read

the comment he made on St. Exupéry's "Wind, Sand and Stars" in July, 1939, emphasizing his complete agreement with the book's philosophy: "Some would confuse such men with toreadors or gamblers. They are praised for their scorn of death. But I have no use for their scorn of death. If such does not have its roots in a responsibility freely assumed, it shrinks into a mark of intellectual poverty, of juvenility." Today that conception belongs even more to Leo Lagrange than to St. Exupéry.

It would be necessary to go even further to show the living philosophy of obligation which Lagrange wished to exemplify throughout his life. The testimony of his party comrades, his adversaries, his companions in war, his superiors. Is it an illusion to believe that, by personal influence, one can, from within his own narrow circle, change the course of things, act effectively?

Let me correct what M. Maurras, who, after all, understood Leo Lagrange in part, but did not know him, had to say: "An orthodox doctrinaire of the Marxist church" . . . No: Lagrange never set up as a model of orthodoxy. He was at once more than that, and less: he wished to be faithful to the ideas he served, to the grand old men who did not deserve blame, even if, by temperament, he reacted differently from them. He had a sense of loyalty and knew that men must bend themselves to disciplined action while they struggled together. But he believed above all in men, in the active rôle of man in history, provided always that this rôle engaged the whole person, and no cheating.

This led him in discussion more and more to emphasize the importance of ideas, of spiritual forces (which represented, moreover, the best of the Juarès tradition in French Socialism), and as the goal was the dignity of man, to denounce the everlasting danger of its perversion by falling back on ignoble means.

Above all he insisted on personal action, giving example, first by devoting himself entirely to his task as artilleryman (to his fingertips, said one of his young friends) and secondly by never refusing any part of the responsibility he assumed.

"I daresay," wrote Maurras, "that he went to the war for democracy against dictatorship saying to himself that the history of the world was going to be affected, and that Force, the great midwife of society, would declare what was the right . . ." Some may remember another article in which Lagrange urged the men of his party not to persist in the state of mind of men defeated. He was a man who had dared to write, "Bad luck to the conquered."

"Force is the thing that counts," answers M. Chardonnet today, and for him force seems indeed to "tell the truth." . . . But other men fought.

Byron and the Monks

Armenian was one of the poet's little-known avocations.

By Donald Attwater

REVIEWING recently the "Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature," Harry Binns commented on the great length of the entry therein devoted to Byron and noted the numerous languages into which some of his poetry has been translated, including even Armenian. The very wide interest in and regard for Byron and his work shown in continental Europe is well known, and it is permissible to think that that interest is not wholly literary: for example, his active association with the cause of Hellas against the Turks struck the imagination of peoples, great and small, full of enthusiasm for liberty and democracy, and the resulting interest has been long-lived. But my concern here is with Byron's contacts with the Armenians and the work of the press, still existing and flourishing, which printed some of his work in their language.

It was, surprising though it may seem, a monastic press. At a time when, for one reason and another, he would have been an unpopular figure in most of the respectable drawing-rooms and many of the clubs in a not notably well-behaved England, Byron was a frequent and welcome visitor to the monastery of Armenian monks on the island of San Lazzaro, off Venice. This house had been founded at Modon in Greece in 1703 by the Venerable Mekhitar of Sivas (Sebaste) for Catholic monks of the Armenian rite, who lived according to the Rule of Saint Benedict (first translated into Armenian by Saint Nerses of Lambron in the twelfth century) adapted to the requirements of that rite and tradition. At that time the Morea was under Venetian rule, but when the Turks advanced on Modon in 1715 Mekhitar removed his monks to Italy and two years later they settled on the island of San Lazzaro, which lies between the Giudecca and the Lido. This has ever since been the mother-house of the Mekhitarist Order, of which a separate branch, established at Trieste in 1773, now has its headquarters at Vienna.

On December 5, 1816, Byron wrote from Venice to Thomas Moore:

By way of divertisement, I am studying daily, at an Armenian monastery, the Armenian language. I found that my mind wanted something craggy to break upon; and this—as the most difficult thing I could discover here for an amusement—I have chosen, to torture me into attention.

It is a rich language, however, and would amply repay anyone the trouble of learning it. I try, and shall go on—but I answer for nothing, least of all for my intentions or my success. There are some very curious MSS in the monastery, as well as books; translations also from Greek originals now lost, and from Persian and Syriac, etc.; besides works of their own people. . . .

Writing to his publisher, Murray, three weeks later, he says: "The superior of the friars [*sic*] is a bishop, and a fine old fellow, with the beard of a meteor. Father Paschal [Aukherian] is also a learned and pious soul. He was two years in England." * And again, on the following January 2:

In another sheet, I send you some sheets of a grammar, English and Armenian, for the use of the Armenians, of which I promoted, and indeed induced, the publication. (It cost me but a thousand francs—French livres.) I still pursue my lessons in the language without any rapid progress, but advancing a little daily. Padre Paschal, with some little help from me as a translator of his Italian into English, is also proceeding in a MS. grammar for the English acquisition of Armenian, which will be printed also, when finished. We want to know if there are any Armenian types and letter-press in England, at Oxford, Cambridge, or elsewhere? You know, I suppose, that, many years ago, the two Whistons published in England an original text of a history of Armenia, with their own Latin translation? Do those types still exist? And where? Pray enquire among your learned acquaintance.

This second grammar was also published in due course and is still in print; Moore found among Byron's papers what seems to have been intended as a preface to it: he gives his impressions of the Mekhitarist monks and goes on to an appreciation of the Armenian people at large:

At this period I was much struck—in common, I believe, with every other traveler—with the society of the Convent of St. Lazarus, which appears to unite all the advantages of the monastic institution, without any of its vices. The neatness, the comfort, the gentleness, the unaffected devotion, the accomplishments and the virtues of the order are well fitted to strike the man of the world with the conviction that "there is another and a better" even in this life. These men are the priesthood of an oppressed and a noble nation. . . .

The Armenian version of the Bible is highly esteemed among scholars, and there is included in some of its editions an apocryphal letter from the

* Most of the abbots of San Lazzaro have been in episcopal orders. Two other of the monks, Fathers Sukias Somalian and Sarkis Theodorosian, visited England in the summer of 1817, furnished with a letter of introduction from Byron.

church of Corinth to Saint Paul, with the apostle's equally apocryphal reply. This attracted Byron's attention, and he wrote to Moore on March 31, 1817: "Did I tell you that I have translated two epistles?—a correspondence between Saint Paul and the Corinthians, not to be found in our version, but in the Armenian—but which seems to me very orthodox, and I have done it into scriptural prose English." Byron's competence as a judge of Christian orthodoxy may perhaps be questioned, but it would appear that he judged rightly in this case, and his version of the letters (printed in Moore's "Letters and Journals of Lord Byron") is admirably made in the style of the translators of the Authorized Version. This is the first known English rendering of the two letters, of which Greek and Latin versions had appeared in 1736 in the Whistons' edition of the Armenian History of Moses of Khorene.

There are a few other references to San Lazzaro in Byron's letters, e.g., in the one to Augusta Leigh of December 18, 1816. He speaks, for example, of taking horse exercise on the Lido, which in those days, mercifully for the monks, had not yet become a pleasure resort of European disrepute.

From the moment of their earliest beginnings at Constantinople in 1701 a principal work of the Mekhitarist fathers had been the printing of books and other printed matter in the Armenian and other languages. It was at Venice, in 1513, that the first Armenian printed book, a work on astrology, was published, and in 1719 the monks began printing there. Ten years later Abbot Mekhitar bought the famous printing-press of the Vartapet Osgan in Amsterdam and set it up in Venice itself, and in 1789 it was transferred to the monastery on San Lazzaro. Meanwhile the intellectual work of the monks was leading to a literary renaissance among the whole Armenian people: their scientific, literary and religious studies, and their sending of books wherever their language was spoken—works which still go throughout the Armenian *diaspora*, from India to America, from Russia to Morocco—conserved the Armenian tongue at a time when it was threatened with extinction. Recognition of what these Catholic religious have done for the whole people was shown in no uncertain fashion by the katholikos John Krimian, head of the dissident church to which most Armenians belong, on the occasion of the Mekhitarist bicentenary in 1901.

In the course of two hundred and twenty years the press has given to the Armenian people works of Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Albert the Great and many of the early fathers, Eastern and Western; the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," a complete Virgil, the dialogues of Plato, Sophocles, Cicero's "De Officiis," Plutarch's "Lives," the "Annales" of Tacitus, Horace's "Ars Poetica,"

and writings of Euripides, Julius Caesar, Seneca, Sallust and Marcus Aurelius, as well as the whole of the Divine Comedy. Among the original works published have been several scriptural commentaries, numerous treatises of biography and history, geography, mathematics and physics, poetry and rhetoric, law, medicine, dictionaries and grammars, a world atlas. A famous edition of the "Chronicle" of Eusebius, made by Father J. B. Aukherian and Cardinal Mai, came from the press in 1818. Among the translations of later works are the funeral sermons of Bossuet, several books of Fénelon, Buffon's "Birds," selected poems of Byron, Leopardi and "Carmen Sylva," "Paradise Lost," "The Deserted Village," Young's "Night Thoughts," Macpherson's "Ossian," and "Uncle Tom's Cabin." With reference to the last, it may be remembered that Harriet Beecher Stowe published in 1870 a "vindication" of Lady Byron.

The Armenian catalogue of the San Lazzaro press of about 1930 contains 112 closely printed foolscap 8vo pages, in which are listed all books published since 1719, of which some, of course, are now out of print. The press also has a catalogue, printed in roman characters, of works in Latin and other European languages, including some twenty-five items in English still in print. Among these, three are of "byronic" interest, viz., "Armenian and English Grammar," by Father Pascal Aukherian and Lord Byron (3rd edition, 1907), "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," Canto IV, by Lord Byron, with translation by Father Leo Alishan (3rd edition, 1901), and "Armenian Exercises and Poetry," by Lord Byron (3rd edition, 1907).

Other publications in English are Father James Issaverdenz's translations of services from the Armenian rite, that of the eucharistic liturgy being dedicated to Mr. F. Colton, who was United States consul at Venice in 1867: probably he had helped with the translation. There are also Father Issaverdenz's two-volume history of "Armenia and the Armenians," published in 1886, "Uncanonical Writings of the Old Testament from Armenian MSS" (2nd edition, 1907), and Father Minas Nurikan's "Live and Times of . . . Abbot Mekhitar," translated by the Reverend John McQuillan, Ph.D. (1915), a very valuable and interesting book.

I have before me as I write a little volume which is a masterly example of the technical skill of the Mekhitarist printers and the wide resources of their press. It is the tenth edition, published in 1882, of the "Preces Sancti Nersesis," consisting of twenty-four short prayers written by Saint Nerses Glaietsi, "the Gracious," the katholikos who did so much for the reunion of Little Armenia with the See of Rome in the twelfth century. They are printed in thirty-six different languages, includ-

ing Irish, Greenlandic, Icelandic, Malayalam, Serbian, Turkish, Chinese, Ethiopic and Hebrew, and this involves the use of fifteen other alphabets of characters besides the Roman.

Just as the Armenian peoples are scattered over the earth, so the score of establishments and missions of the Mekhitarist monks are widely separated, from Jerusalem to Sèvres, from Padua to the Piraeus; of how they are faring in the present disturbances nothing is yet known by the present writer.

Summer School of the Liturgy

By DANIEL M. CANTWELL

ARCHBISHOP STRITCH is responsible, the second time within a year, for a forward thrust in the liturgical movement. Last fall, it was the Liturgical Week; this summer, a three-week Summer School of the Liturgy beginning July 14 and ending Friday, August 1. The commencement day exercises were a Solemn Mass which certainly dismissed (*Ite, Missa est*) a very enthusiastic graduating class really anxious to commence again to apply Pius X's formula for revitalizing Christian society: "The foremost and indispensable fount of the true Christian spirit is the active participation in the most holy mysteries and in the public and solemn prayers of the Church."

Now that it is passed, just a few reflections.

It was fortunate that St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, at Mundelein, Illinois—the scene of three successive Summer Schools on Labor and Social Action—should have housed the School of the Liturgy. About that tie-up, more later.

It was also fortunate that Father Reinhold of Seattle, Washington, was selected to open the sessions and give the doctrinal background for the liturgical studies. He has a vision and a perspective that may be due partly at least to the vast expanse of the sea: that God is the "totally different," that we have sinned by oversimplification in talking about and acting with the things of God, that we have attempted to familiarize ourselves with God through ludicrous and vulgar means. It is certainly true that we have overemphasized a familiarity with God through subjective and emotional efforts, however excessive, rather than from the objective participation in God's life through insertion into Christ and His mysteries. The liturgy therefore *takes* men into His divine life; in no case does human nature make a charge on heaven, or expand and soar up to God. Thus, too, in the words of the chaplain of the Apostolate of the Sea, "the Mystical Body will expand among

our people less by indoctrination, than by celebrating, acting in the great sacrifice and sacrament that primarily builds us into Christ."

"Building us into Christ" immediately calls up in our minds the graphic expression of Saint Paul: we are the "*aedificium*," the building, of which Christ is the cornerstone. We are bound to our fellow-men, we are a new reality in the world, we constitute a new unity, an anointed temple by the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ. We are moreover a living unity, an organism, alive with the divine life of Jesus Christ shared by all.

We are inserted into the social organism of Christ and His brethren. The Life that breathes in our souls is the Life of Christ and His brethren. The worship that we perform is the worship of Christ and His brethren. The sacrifice that we offer, the Bread that we break, the mysteries that we celebrate all belong by reason of first inheritance to Christ and His brethren. The complete social evil is not only that we covet our neighbor's goods, or that we covet our neighbor's wife, but also that we covet our neighbor's God.

From the opening talk we were filled with this realization of the liturgy—the hundred and twenty-five priests and seminarians who attended the school. All were ready to heed the later warning of Archbishop Stritch: "There must be no excesses. The liturgical movement must not be occupied with Gothic arches and Romanesque baldachinos."

The sowers of the "semen liturgicum" gathered from many fields—scattered dioceses and far-flung religious communities. The register showed names from Seattle and Connecticut; Alabama and North Dakota; New York and New Mexico; Missouri and Illinois; Benedictine abbeys and Servite monasteries; high schools and colleges; seminaries and parishes. The mustard-seed is growing—slowly and quietly—countless little groups working throughout the land, not all of whom could come, who demonstrate the work of the Holy Spirit filling the whole world and reaching the hearts of men.

The liturgical movement is becoming integral and, with God's continued help, will perform its function of integrating. No longer, as was once suggested, is it a movement of esthetes or historians. It must not be thought of in terms of plain chant, altars facing the people, revived processions, or full vestments. It gets its meaning entirely from the fullness of Christ—the fullness of His priesthood—shared in by priests and laity. It is a call to an active exercise of Christ's priesthood which all Christians share by virtue of the sacramental character received in Baptism and Confirmation. It is a call "to enter into a life that is greater than our own, independent of our own, but which, the moment it has taken us up, becomes our own to a marvelous degree." It is a call to

enter Christ's life, to realize that the "Christian soul is not an isolated being sanctified by God, but that it is a member of the Body of Christ," engrafted into Christ, the Vine of all the sanctified branches; to enter into the Christ-life of the complete sacramental system through which we enter into the world already consecrated by Christ.

The whole world opens up to the liturgical movement by this broader vision. There is not a single human action that is outside the orbit of Christ's priesthood by which all things are consecrated in Him, no action that is not to be inserted into Christ living in His sacramental presence. This is the essential attitude of the Christian mind—a sense of sharing in the things of Christ. There is nothing in this world that is not to be brought within the sacramental system in which Christ lives and is poured out. Thus, the essence of the liturgical spirit is the revival of the Christian spirit that knows Christ to be the Firstborn in whose inheritance we share, bound together in the fellowship of the Spirit of Love; the spirit that knows our lives to be an "entering in."

Consequently it was to be expected that the School of the Liturgy should study more than ceremonies, the dialogue Mass, the administration of the Sacraments, the Divine Office. For, while, in the words of Pius X, "the active participation in the most holy mysteries and in the public and solemn prayers of the Church is the foremost and indispensable fount of the true Christian spirit," still the Spirit of Christ "contains all things." There had to be, therefore, classes in the Liturgy and peace, the Liturgy and Catholic action, the Liturgy and social action, the Liturgy and the family. Maurice Lavanoux, the only layman present, discussed with us one evening the Liturgy and work, which is, essentially, the meaning of the Liturgy and art.

We think that it is important that everyone see the position of these things in the liturgical movement—and that unless they become part and parcel of the movement, it will be abortive and never reach its full stature. We must work against the tendency to think of the liturgy in terms of rural and stable communities, the blessings of fields and crops. We must strain every effort to bring the liturgy to the factory worker, for our industrial economy must participate in Christ's consecrating influence just as much as the agricultural economy of former times.

We think it is important to resist the tendency to romanticize the Mystical Body, to think of it too much in terms of peaceful comfort and complacency, and not in terms of the Spirit Who replenishes those who hunger and thirst after justice. Thus it does not exhaust the implications of the Mystical Body to say that we must live in charity and peace and that our left hand must not strike

at our right. It might very easily be our duty to assert and defend rights, as it is certainly the duty of workers to join together to protect themselves and their fellow workers from injustices that unchecked will destroy society. Certainly it is the hope of the Holy Father that the liturgical spirit will develop a social system organized in mutual responsibility. Our personal liturgical spirit must ally our sympathies with workers, the exploited, the poor, and avoid being stunted or missing a great "sacrament"—Christ hidden in the "least"; nothing will have greater apologetic value for the liturgical movement. Thus will all things center about and go out from Christ.

Let me point out three or four valuable features of the School of the Liturgy: To my mind, unsurpassed was the part of the program given to the Liturgy and Catholic action. Beginning with Father Godfrey's class on Confirmation, the sacrament of second initiation and Catholic action, it was taken up by Father William Boyd, of Chicago, in an *ex professo* analysis of Catholic action and the Liturgy, and concluded by a practical demonstration of "cell" activity. The demonstration was given by a group of boys, recent graduates from Our Lady Help of Christians Grammar School, organized under the chaplaincy of Father James Killgallon. It was conducted as a regular cell meeting in the presence of the priests attending the school. That evening alone was worth the three weeks that we spent here; rarely does anyone see the Holy Spirit working so visibly.

These young apostles talked as naturally about supernatural grace and the Mystical Body as about their golf and caddying. They answered questions from the priests with great ease and with the familiarity that can only come from feeling a spiritual affinity toward their ordained leaders. In their meeting they probed a portion of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, and then began their individual reports for that week on their personal efforts to check uncharitable talk, followed by an inquiry in JOC technique (observe-judge-act) into the question of charity between brothers and sisters, and closing finally with a review of the proper parts of the Mass for the next Sunday.

Only once during the two-hour meeting did the chaplain speak, and then only to ask a question. His work is entirely behind the scenes, in preparing the meeting with the "cell" leader. It is definitely the apostolate of the laity, an apostolate that is "necessary beyond all measure" (Pius XI). The boys are working, praying and sacrificing to see it spread. "It would help a great deal, Fathers," said one of the boys, "if you would spread a few hints among others." (Pius XI had already said, "It is your chief duty to seek and train lay apostles.")

The Chicago priests are following not only the

commission of the Holy Father but the Pope's idea of Catholic action. They insist that it must be distinguished carefully from Catholic activity, adhering strictly to the Pope's plan of an organized, specialized apostolate in an environment. They admit having made mistakes and would like to see others avoid them by specialization in age, sex, and occupation or environment. They are most willing to share the fruits of their experiences, and the author would be happy to answer questions or forward them.

"It was an important evening, boys," said Monsignor Hellriegel, "because you have taught and inspired priests from almost thirty dioceses, who will go back to do their part."

It was happily arranged that we could not only discuss the liturgy in theory but also enter into it in practice. We closed each of the first two weeks by participating in a dialogue Mass, the first celebrated by Father Reinhold, and the second by Monsignor Hellriegel, who reminded us at the end of his memorable homily that it was, on that day, just twelve years (significant number!) since the first Liturgical Day at St. John's Abbey, July 25, 1929. The third week we closed with a Solemn Mass celebrated by Father Godfrey Diekmann, O.S.B., of St. John's Abbey, with the community singing the Mass in Gregorian and the schola the proper parts.

The first week we recited Prime before the first class in the morning, and beginning with the second week, the Little Hours before the classes throughout the day. After the discussion period at night, we closed the day with Compline chanted by the community. It was the general reaction that we, priests and people, have sacrificed too much in abandoning the public prayer of the Church.

Many of us, for the first time, found the chant alive. In all there were ten classes, with a minimum of theory and much practice. Under the direction of Father Joseph Kush, of the Seminary at Mundelein, we learned the Mass that was sung the last week, and found out how badly our own Mass chants—the Preface and Pater Noster—needed reshaping. The return of the chant to our people who will once again form "themselves into a great choir" was the subject of several interesting discussions in which Father Thomas Dennehy, of Hartford, Connecticut, and Father Bernard Laukemper, of Chicago, contributed greatly.

One of the most productive techniques, which ought to form part of all such schools or conferences, was the discussion period lasting two hours each evening. It is largely in those periods that the practical problems are met, ideas clash, thought is clarified, experiences are exchanged.

Great credit and gratitude are due to Monsignor Reynold Hillenbrand, rector of the Seminary, for bringing that body of priests and scholars

together. It must work for the increase in the Spirit of Christ in our people and draw them to the source of piety "by actually participating in the venerated mysteries of the Church and in her public and solemn prayers" (Pius XI).

The faculty included, besides those already mentioned, Father Gerald Ellard, S.J., of St. Mary's, Kansas, who traced the history of liturgical reform and the dialogue Mass; Father William Busch, of St. Paul, Minnesota, who analyzed the liturgical year; Father Gregory O'Brien, O.S.M., of Chicago, who pointed out the deep cross section of the Scriptures that the liturgy opens out to us; Father Godfrey Diekmann, O.S.B., who dealt with the sacramental system.

I have made no effort at all at summarizing the material these men have given us. I wish only to point out that there can scarcely be a better investment than a mimeographed copy of the proceedings, including bibliographical material, which can be obtained by writing to the Rector of the Seminary.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

I HOPE that "France On Berlin Time," by Thomas Kernan (J. B. Lippincott, \$2.75), chosen by the Catholic Book Club, will also be widely (and wisely) chosen by those Americans who not only read books about the war but who also are thinking about their own country, their own families, their own future and the future of civilization. Listening to one of the best radio addresses on the war problems so far presented to thinking Americans by Dr. Cronin of St. Mary's Seminary, on the Catholic Hour last Sunday, in which the conflicting views of the isolationists and the interventionists were presented with what seemed to me to be perfect fairness, and which called upon American Catholics not only to consider these conflicting views with complete fairness but also in the light that is specially vouchsafed to Catholics by the teachings of their Church in regard to the ethical and spiritual principles involved, I could think of no book which should be of greater practical value to puzzled Americans than Mr. Kernan's account of what happened in France after the Nazi conquest, and the lessons which that awful experience contains for the United States.

Among the already numerous and constantly increasing number of books written by actual eye-witnesses of the events in Europe, "France on Berlin Time" is conspicuously useful for American readers, and perhaps especially so for Catholic Americans, for a number of important reasons. In the first place Mr. Kernan, unlike so many of the authors of such records and interpretations, was not a professional journalist or author, although as a writer his natural gift for clear and vivid expression, his literary and artistic and philosophical perceptions are obviously

greater and superior in quality to those of the majority of foreign correspondents. Secondly, he knew his France and his Germany far more thoroughly and much more naturally, so to speak, than the great majority of the roving and usually superficial journalists. For his knowledge came from many years of residence in both countries, mainly in France, in which, while his own personal interests and affiliations placed him in sympathetic contact with literary and artistic circles, his duties and responsibilities as a business man, executive head of a concern handling large publishing interests in Europe, gave him a permanent inside position in European affairs.

The importance of this fact is primary, because economic problems are the crux of the complex of great problems precipitated in cataclysmic fashion by the nazi revolution, and only men who like Mr. Kernan have themselves been engaged in European economic life are really competent to testify on this subject. Moreover, Mr. Kernan is a Catholic, one who for many years both in Europe and here at home has been engaged in promoting the study of modern problems in the light thrown upon them by Catholic literature. Mr. Kernan was not only in close touch with the religious movements in Europe, but was in a position to grasp and understand factors in the great struggle between the forces of the new paganism released in the Hitler movement and the forces of traditional Christendom which are either misunderstood or ignored by the greater number of American journalists abroad. Hence, Mr. Kernan's description of the network of economic measures in which the nazis are paralyzing the feeble resistance of the millions of their captives and potential serfs, slaves or collaborators in the many lands conquered by them has great authority. He has seen it applied. He has traced its strands to the central control in Berlin. He knows and relates the truth which so many Americans find it hard to realize, how potent not only are the bombs and planes and armies of Hitler, but also how potent are the propaganda and business methods which accompany the application of more lethal weapons in the Hitlerian campaign for the conquest of the world.

But it is all related calmly, as well as clearly; not that Mr. Kernan is at all indifferent or neutral in his own judgment, but because that is the way his mind works, both as an observer and as a writer. He has produced a book of capital importance and value to his own fellow citizens. Far more than other sensational and emotional accounts of the fall of France, this book should be circulated by the hundreds of thousands here—before it is too late.

Communications

BERGSON

Easthampton, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Here is some additional information to join with that already published in *THE COMMONWEAL* (January 17 and March 7) on the subject of Bergson's Christianity. I have recently been informed from Switzerland that following the publication of the French text of my article in the review *Nova et Vetera*, the *Figaro*

published a brief note, "Bergson and Catholicism," wherein it adduces the testimony of a "well-known Dominican who was friendly with Bergson." According to this testimony Bergson was not formally baptized, but had resolved to receive Baptism: "*Bergson showed a desire for Baptism and he had selected the priest whom he wished to have baptize him. He said he wished to wait, through a delicacy of feeling occasioned by events. My informant is the priest he had selected, who, for this reason, was called in by the family, at the desire of the deceased, and said prayers over his mortal remains, although no regular religious rites were performed.*"

Is this version the definitive account of what happened, or will another public testimony be adduced to complete it? In any case, it would appear from this that Bergson desired Baptism to such an extent that he even had selected the priest he wished to have administer it. The words attributed to the celebrated Dominican are evidence of that which is essentially important: the Baptism of desire, and the religious conversion of the great philosopher. These were so clear that a Catholic priest was called, and not a rabbi, "at the desire of the deceased," to say prayers over his remains. It was added that it was "for reasons of delicacy, occasioned by events" (I have earlier indicated the existence of this feeling) that Bergson had "said he wished to wait." If this is true, what a renunciation! Will his people understand the dramatic sacrifice which was thus made in its behalf?

The person who wrote me last summer giving me news of Bergson's baptism has been living in Paris for almost a year now, and I have not been able to receive further letters from her. That is why I have no new information to supply on my own account, at least none addressed directly to me. May I add that it seems to me highly desirable that M. Jacques Chevalier, as the *Figaro* itself also suggests, should agree to tell what he knows?

It is possible admittedly that my correspondent, assured of Bergson's expressed desire for Baptism, should have considered this Baptism itself certain, without awaiting any special confirmation of this point. Yet it seems reasonable to await further precise information on this subject. Whatever may be the case, I hope that the item reported in the *Figaro* will quiet all doubts on the subject of Bergson's deep Christian intentions—those intentions to which I could not help giving witness in accordance with my own personal contact with him.

In conclusion may I cite three passages from a joint work on Bergson recently published in Switzerland by Albert Béguin and Pierre Thévenaz? The first is from the contribution made to this volume by Jacques Chevalier, who writes that Bergson's thought reached its term in "integral Christianity," and who quotes these words spoken by the great philosopher: "Christianity transfigures everything it touches simply by making it Christian."

The second passage is from Georges Cattaui: "Bergson revealed to me that he believed in the divinity of Christ; even more, that he recognized the power of the sacraments."

The third is by a celebrated Dominican, Father Sertillanges: "His evolution was so profound that he felt the need of joining himself not only to Christ and the saints,

but to the Church. He intended to add a paragraph to this effect to 'The Two Sources' . . . I did not learn until later, so complete was the discretion of this good man, that he had even then resolved to receive Baptism, that he had chosen the priest who was to administer the sacrament (from whom I obtained this information) and that he had put off its reception only for temporary reasons, wherein the delicacy of his heart alone had a voice." Thus, concludes Father Sertillanges, Bergson's thought moved forward step by step "to the very boundaries of the Catholic faith and the consecration of Baptism."

RAISSA MARITAIN.

KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

Farmingdale, N. Y.

TO the Editors: At the risk of appearing unsophisticated in literary taste I would like to say a word in defense of Dr. Cronin's "The Keys of the Kingdom," and at the same time protest that THE COMMONWEAL's review was much too tough on the doctor.

It is perfectly true that Cronin is no Graham Greene or Mauriac. His style is at times old-fashioned, popular (in the bad sense), what we hard-boiled moderns call "corny." He seems to lack the intuitive sense of form and the high intelligence common to great authors and artists. He uses plot-tricks that occasionally squeak at the hinges. In no way does he qualify as great.

So what? So he hasn't written a great book. But I do think that he has written a very fine book, and even though it has suffered the curse of extreme popularity, that should not prevent us from being big about the whole thing and bestowing a word of praise where praise is due.

Because there are certain things about "The Keys of the Kingdom" (a weak title) which it seems to me are plainly admirable and praiseworthy. Not only is it a good story (even dyspeptic Ralph Thompson admitted that), but the book also has realism, humor, warmth and vitality. Father Chisholm can't boast the chest-hairs of a Hemingway hero or the heavy-duty intellect of a Mann hero, and he does intone a little obviously at times; but in spite of all that he manages to be (for me at least) a thoroughly human, likable and interesting person.

Above all, Cronin has managed to write a popular book and at the same time achieve the effect (very rare indeed these days) of making Christianity, Catholicism and even sanctity seem desirable things, while at the same time persuading the reader that comfort-worship, dishonesty, pride and phoney piety are highly undesirable things. For this accomplishment, if nothing else, I think intelligent Catholics owe Dr. Cronin a debt of gratitude and at least two-and-a-half cheers.

JOHN C. CORT.

The Screen

Death Takes a Holiday on Borrowed Time

WAR TIME seems to call for fantasy in entertainment because fantasy is the farthest escape from troublous reality. On its toes to sense audience desires, Hollywood quickly popped up with two modern

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Altman shoes, second floor

fairly tales in rapid succession. (I hope the cinema factories don't overdo now; a cycle of fantasies, even good ones, would be more whipped cream than any reviewer could stand.) Hardly had we finished laughing at RKO's "Tom, Dick and Harry" whimsy, which had fantastic dream sequences woven into the plot, when we started chuckling all over again at Columbia's even funnier, even more adult, even more fanciful "*Here Comes Mr. Jordan*." Mr. Jordan is an up-to-date Charon who runs the conveyance that is outward bound after life leaves the body. As one might expect in this twentieth century, a plane is used to carry passengers between here and hereafter. This is particularly the story of one Joe Pendleton, a fighting pug well on his way to championship when he is snatched from an accident into Mr. Jordan's presence by a too hasty, overenthusiastic messenger of afterlife. But Joe's time on earth isn't up; he has another fifty years to live; so Mr. Jordan lets him return in the body of a most unscrupulous Wall Street magnate who has just been killed by his wife and secretary. Joe, being the good guy he is, is able to do some pretty startling things while he occupies the body of this fabulously wealthy big shot.

Sidney Buchman and Seton I. Miller wrote the hilariously funny script for "*Here Comes Mr. Jordan*" from Harry Segall's play "*Heaven Can Wait*." The lines and situations are clever without being silly or smartalecky, and they never go soft or maudlin. Alexander Hall directed Everett Riskin's production with a fresh, exhilarating quality that is never forced. Through the good performances of a hand-picked cast, the amusing goings-on make unusually gay comedy. Robert Montgomery's Joe is a lovable, honest pug who is thoroughly baffled by some of the events but not too happy about losing his own body, which was in the pink of condition. However he comes around to enjoying the task before him and is finally satisfied with the solution. You'll notice that you seldom see Montgomery from the front during the fight scenes—but it would be squeamish to ask for any more

in a performance that is so well polished. Claude Rains, as Mr. Jordan, is tolerantly amused at Joe's perplexity about afterlife, but he is kind to Joe as he guides him through his difficulties. Evelyn Keyes is the pretty little thing who sees goodness in Joe regardless of whose body he is inhabiting. Edward Everett Horton enjoys himself as the blundering messenger who causes all this difficulty; but funniest of all is James Gleason, Joe's manager, who is dumbfounded by the whole business, then accepts it and gets himself all tangled up in explanations. Yes, "*Here Comes Mr. Jordan*" is sheer delight and an intelligent flight of fancy for grown-ups. It is not always easy to figure out why some fantasies click and some don't. But this one does.

I saw "*Charley's Aunt*" in Milwaukee when the temperature out on the streets was 96. The theater was crowded for an afternoon show, but I suppose most of the audience, like myself, were seeking some relief, any relief, from that furnace-like blast of hot air that makes the corn in these parts such a delight to corn-fanciers. The large number of youngsters in the audience shrieked with glee during the antics and were positively beside themselves every time Jack Benny, wrapped in petticoats, fichus and other antiquated woman's garb, hoisted his skirts to expose his trousers underneath, or smoked a cigar, or tripped, or was almost caught shaving or doing any masculine gestures that accentuated the absurdity of his disguise. I found myself being critical, which I don't think was due to the sweltering, unreasonable weather because I was quite comfortable in the air-conditioned theater. But as the audience guffawed, I kept wondering why. After all "*Charley's Aunt*" is more than thirty years old and it must have been pretty corny when it first appeared. But why should this thin, phony, obvious comedy have lasted through the years, through revival after revival, and turn up again for its third filming? I didn't see the revival on Broadway last year, but I am told it was well done and that audiences enjoyed it. And now audiences seem to be laughing at this new movie version. Of course any group that can stage a naïve piece like this and make it even passably funny deserves some credit. Jack Benny's puss looks pretty cute as it coyly peers through a curly wig and behind a fan. And there's Kay Francis as the real Charley's Aunt; James Ellison, Richard Haydn, Anne Baxter and Arleen Whelan as the young people who benefit by Benny's making a fool of himself; and Edmund Gwenn and Laird Cregar as the older boys who fall for Aunt Benny. Archie Mayo's direction is keyed to catch every funny situation and cliché; and William Perlberg uses costumes and Oxford sets from the period in which they belong. In writing his script George Seaton made no attempt to modernize the traditions of Brandon Thomas's play. The popularity of this theatrical fossil remains a mystery to me, but of one thing I am sure: we're going to hear again and again from Charley's Aunt who "comes from Brazil—where the nuts come from."

Judy Canova is not Ginger Rogers or Bette Davis, but she has her following which, I am told, runs into large numbers in the back country. In "*Puddin' Head*" Judy

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doesn't have much of a story, so Director Joseph Santley allows his star and the supporting cast to break into their specialty acts on the slightest provocation. Judy sings hillbilly and otherwise, and dances with Eddie Foy, Jr., whose dry delivery and unaffected comedy manner steals the show every now and then. The plot, about the country girl from Withering Heights who comes to the big city with her uncle (Slim Summerville) to live in a house that's set right in the midst of a group of office buildings, can't be scrutinized too carefully. It gives Judy a chance to box with Foy and be romantic with Francis Lederer in between her songs. I took two children to the preview with me; they loved the whole proceedings and were bowled over with laughter as Judy sang "Hey, Junior!" and her shrill voice broke the neighborhood windows.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Summer's Reading

ACCORDING to the latest reports, cited in the current issue of the *Publishers' Weekly* and based on returns from a hundred book sellers, the American people drew farther and farther away from escapism in their summer reading. This was particularly true of the ten most popular works of non-fiction, but the trend is marked in the fiction list as well. During the month of July the novel that sold the most copies, "This Above All," by Eric Knight, as well as the second choice, "Random Harvest," by James Hilton, deal respectively with this war and the last war in England, while the newcomer to the list which in sales seems destined to surpass them all, "The Keys of the Kingdom," by A. J. Cronin, deals with a topic that would be of interest at any time.

"This Above All," by Eric Knight (COMMONWEAL, June 27; Harper, \$2.50), is high on the best-seller list for the fourth successive month. In the main it is a doleful tale of the completely demoralizing effects on a survivor of the evacuation of Dunkirk as well as of the bad effects of the war on the girl who seeks to comfort him. Most of these pages are filled with their discussions of the widest range of topics and there is some tribute also to the courage of the British expeditionary force, but on the whole it is a sordid story, obviously of the hard-boiled journalistic school.

James Hilton's "Random Harvest" (COMMONWEAL, February 28; Little Brown, \$2.50) has a distinctly different tone, the daily life of the hero in the first half or so of the book being so uneventful as to verge on dullness. This is a strange thing to find with a man who has proved to be so popular a writer here in the United States. However, the whole thing wakes up about half way through, providing a stirring combination of flight from pursuing military authorities with a moving love story.

Controversy continues to rage as to the merits of "The Keys of the Kingdom," by A. J. Cronin (COMMONWEAL, August 1; Little Brown, \$2.50). Many readers have found in it an absorbingly good story while others have focused attention on its deficiencies as literature. Some are pleased that a Catholic priest should be the hero of a book that is so widely read, while others resent the fact

that the other members of the clergy in the cast of characters are presented so unflatteringly. Experts in the field have a number of points on which to criticize the author's theology as well. As the subject of so much controversy, if not for the success with which the narrative is unfolded, "The Keys of the Kingdom" is indeed worthy of perusal.

The fourth most popular best selling fiction book is also published by Little, Brown (\$2.50), "The Captain from Connecticut," by C. S. Forester. Here is another highly popular author repeating former successes with the American reading public. This time he turns to the War of 1812 to produce a stirring romance on the Island of Martinique between the New England hero and the French Governor's beautiful daughter. The story also has a goodly share of blood and thunder in the action and intrigue between the American captain and the British, with a fling at the Caribbean pirates thrown in. It all makes for good escapist summer reading.

Even more escapist and nostalgic is "They Came to a River," by Alice McKay (COMMONWEAL, June 27; Macmillan, \$2.75). Here it is the flow of days in the Columbia River country of the last century as they manifest themselves in the rather uneventful course of the heroine's life. "Mr. and Mrs. Cugat," by Isabell Scott Rorick (COMMONWEAL, May 23; Houghton, Mifflin, \$2.00), is still being advertised as effective escapism. It is a rather amusing inconsequential picture of happy married life in an apparently childless ménage. "Captain Paul," by Commander Edward Ellsberg (Dodd, Mead, \$2.75), is by far the most blood and thunder volume on this list. It is excitingly told by a native of Nantucket who went to sea in a whaler at the age of 16 and soon met up with the American hero whom he admired with youthful ardor from the first. A tale that crackles with action almost from the very start. A lively page of American history.

The fiction list is brought to a close by "H. M. Pulham, Esquire," by John P. Marquand (COMMONWEAL, May 2; Little, Brown, \$2.50), "Above Suspicion," by Helen MacInnes (COMMONWEAL, August 8; Little Brown, \$2.50), and "Restless are the Sails," by Evelyn Eaton (COMMONWEAL, July 18; Harper, \$2.50). The first of these deals in the characteristic Marquand manner with the decline of New England vitality. The second is an exciting story of England in the present war, and the last a competent eighteenth century historical novel.

Non-fiction

The far away best seller in this field is William L. Shirer's "Berlin Diary" (COMMONWEAL, August 1; Knopf, \$3). This is indeed one of the most worthwhile of the current best-seller list, presenting as it does with remarkable brevity and clarity the onward rush of the Hitler war machine down to a year ago. It is filled with terse asides which, when compared with the reactions of the outside world, disclose remarkable penetration into Mr. Hitler's unavowed objectives. To read "Berlin Diary" is to witness history in the making and the author's consistent anti-nazi bias does not seem to destroy in the least the authenticity of what he wrote day by day.

After nine months of continuous best sellerdom Alice

Duer Miller's narrative poem of England and the two wars, "The White Cliffs" (COMMONWEAL, June 27; Coward-McCann, \$1), is still second on the list. A newcomer is Douglas Miller's "You Can't Do Business with Hitler" (Little, Brown, \$1.50). From start to finish it is a diatribe against nazi objectives and nazi methods. Convincing as it is, it makes one wonder whether even unintentionally the German leaders have not hit upon some techniques others could learn from to the benefit of the common good. But anyone who imagines that in the event of a Hitler victory other countries in the world could successfully do business with Hitler on anything like their own terms will find in the comments of this American commercial attaché in Berlin a convincing number of indications to the contrary. Even more impassioned is Pierre van Paassen's "The Time Is Now!" (COMMONWEAL, June 20; Dial Press, \$1), with its recommendations of the seizure of Dakar, the Canaries and the Azores and the sending of an American expeditionary force to India.

After these, Alice Duer Miller's "I Have Loved England" (Putnam, \$2.75) is somewhat of a relief with its soft half-tones of the English countryside and of historic landmarks of various English sections and periods. These lovely half-tones are punctuated with descriptive paragraphs and quotations from the English poets. Then comes Winston Churchill's "Blood, Sweat and Tears" (COMMONWEAL, June 27; Putnam, \$3), another volume devoted to history in the making. This time it is the British Premier's speeches from May 5, 1938 on.

Jan Valtin's exciting autobiography of German communists and nazis, "Out of the Night" (COMMONWEAL, March 28; Alliance, \$3.50), also continues to sell well. So too does the far less personal and less stirring "Exit Laughing," by Irvin S. Cobb (COMMONWEAL, June 27; Bobbs-Merrill, \$3.50). A newcomer is "Amazon Throne," by Bertita Harding (COMMONWEAL, July 11; Bobbs-Merrill, \$3.50), a rather theatrical biography of the Braganzas of Brazil. Finally there is William A. Percy's discussion of problems on the Mississippi, "Lanterns on the Levee" (COMMONWEAL, May 30; Knopf, \$3).

ASSAYER.

More Books of the Week

Two Autobiographies

Father of the Blues. An Autobiography by W. C. Handy. Edited by Arna Bontemps. Macmillan. \$3.00.

W. C. HANDY is justly called the "father of the blues" inasmuch as he is the first man known to have put Negro work songs and the songs of roustabouts into generally popular form and substance. What had been endless, rambling, 1,000-verse mournings, under Handy's clever pen shaped up into the *St. Louis Blues*, the *Memphis Blues*, and made Broadway and the nation for a long time not only blues-conscious, but more than ever before, Negro-conscious. Nor is the end yet in sight, fortunately.

Handy is not the very first man to point the way to new music forms based on Negro and Indian lore. There has been very little music written in Europe and the

Americas that has not made use of this new world. On the side of classicism, of course, the English Negro, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, and in America, Delius as well as Dvorák made adaptations from American Negro and Indian folk-music. Dvorák learned much from the American Negro singer and composer, Harry T. Burleigh. And Delius—just now coming into his own through the media of radio stations WQXR and WNYC—will undoubtedly grow to an acceptance surpassing the heights reached by Dvorák.

This is not wholly beside the point. The classicists have drawn on polite themes. But, as Handy writes: "The Blues were all born humble but they were not content to stay in the shady districts beyond the railroad tracks. Time came when they put on top hat and tails, so to speak." While Dvorák (Harry Burleigh), Coleridge-Taylor and Delius are accepted, if not slightly tarnished, by too much respectability, tunes written and stimulated by the *boogie* writers (now called *boogie-woogies*), humble piano thumpers in Mississippi swamps and river dens, will in the long run outlive the more polite stuff because of their freshness and vigor.

The reader must not get the impression that Handy has written a dull, stylistic book; full of literary and scientific treatment. On the contrary, to those who know him even in passing Handy shows up real in this book. (His editor, Mr. Bontemps, is a faithful amenuensis, not a "ghost.")

One gets the impression that the book is straight; that is, soul-felt—even though the stories he tells, sometimes, are a little tall, as for example those murder stories he brings out from the Deep South. It is hard to believe that Southern whites and Negroes rate human life so cheaply. (That is, it is hard for *you, the reader*, to believe it; for, between Mr. Handy and all Southern readers there is a clear understanding.)

Hence Mr. Handy gives his personal history. He went to school in the South. He gives a faithful picture of the first generation of Negro educators: with all their anxiety, determination and matchless will to teach civilization to our neglected one-tenth. What man could be a better narrator than one who has climbed the ladder, missing none of the rounds? Handy was born in Florence, Alabama, in 1873. You can not tell him about KKK, music, education, interracial cooperation, race hatred, violence, bread and meat. He is a worthy instructor in all these arts.

In late years Handy has been a severe critic of all these things, and he himself has been criticized roundly. He is the entertainer who owes everything to the masses. It is not odd that the communists have tried to ring him into their three-ring circuses. But Handy is an individualist, a "Handy-ist." And yet he is not beyond the use of mass pressure, being one of the founders of ASCAP. Having been "gyped" out of the royalties of his *Memphis Blues*, he waxes eloquent all over the last chapters about the new day for composers. He believes that no longer will brilliant composers go hungry; for ASCAP will save them.

Perhaps, and then perhaps not. Neither ASCAP nor BMI will ever see all genius rewarded. We will always have just a wee bit of exploitation hanging around to make us ashamed of ourselves.

The man whose parents "were among the four million slaves who had been freed and left to shift for themselves" has written a book that is courageous, entertaining and

highly informative. It should go on the "must" list of summer and winter readers.

GEORGE STREATOR.

A Great Experiment. An Autobiography by Lord Robert Cecil (Viscount Cecil). Oxford. \$3.50.

OSTENSIBLY an autobiography, this volume is largely a commentary on the foreign policies of Great Britain at Geneva and a record of the author's most important work there. Lord Robert Cecil writes from an intimate vantage point, and critically, in a year-by-year evaluation of the political activities of the League of Nations, and the support given it by his government, particularly with regard to sanctions and disarmament. He traces the decline of the League's prestige from 1931, and places much blame for this decline on the earlier development of a British policy of "no commitments." There is no mention of American precedent for this policy. He sees the affairs of Corfu, Manchuria, Spain and Czechoslovakia as questions of international principle rather than of national interest, and laments the tendency of the Foreign Office to resort to verbal protest rather than to action, in situations where British citizens were not directly involved and where there was no direct appeal to popular imagination. Personal evaluations, such as those of Ramsay MacDonald, Sir John Simon, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Dr. Edward Benes are infrequent and slight. Appendices annotate his disagreement with the Cabinet. There is almost no discussion of the economic and social factors underlying stress among nations; and there are some odd trivialities. An ecclesiastical dignitary going to a Whitsunday service with an entourage is "medieval." Generalizations of an inconclusive character occur frequently on the subject of the social work of the League.

Some few criticisms are leveled at the structure of the League of Nations, but more are directed to the failures of its members. Lord Robert would have given it an international police force such as the French desired, and would have relied more on American offers of cooperation than did his colleagues. He criticizes the increase in the size of the Council and the sending of national political officials to its sessions, as destructive of an international *esprit de corps*. He wished to see the disarmament provisions fulfilled, and wanted to formulate a definition of aggression. His chief attack, however, is for League members who wanted benefits without responsibilities, for public officials who tried to keep peace by not imitating the dictators who were bent on using force, and for negotiation outside the League. His hatred is for war and the war system. One wishes he had been more detailed in his narration of facts; but what he does relate shows clearly the necessity for more thorough international organization than that afforded by the diplomatic system.

ELIZABETH LYNSEY.

BIOGRAPHY

In the Mill. John Masfield. Macmillan. \$2.00.

A SMALL PART of the life of England's poet laureate, a most intimate glimpse of a great man's experience as a factory hand in Yonkers at the time when the wonders of verse and literature were just beginning to unfold for him.

Masfield returns to the factory in Yonkers, in which he had spent a short time (but a formative one) years ago, is shocked by the size of it, the depersonalization of it, the

lack of noise that portended work being done. His reflections, simple, generous, factual, without bitterness make a book of fine reading, intelligently sentimental with a ruminativeness that bespeaks a kindly man's regard for past associations and friends. Masfield has come a long way since he was a "mistake finder" in an American carpet factory, with an avidity for learning and an ambition to poetry, without the arty, screwball affectations that marked the early lives of other great poets. But this is no success story. It is merely a snatch from the past, written, it seems, just because the scene was brought back to him and he thought others might find it of interest.

Masfield reveals his then regard for the contemplativeness of Oriental religion and for the ideas of Ruskin. But he was no crusader. He liked the factory and he liked his bosses and fellow workers. But he liked the sea more and the muses beckoned to him. Besides he was a true Englishman in a strange land. So he went away with his ambitions to his own country and to success. Now he returns to tell us with gracious simplicity he had a very nice stay here.

WILLIAM M. CALLAHAN.

FICTION

Men Working. John Faulkner. Harcourt. \$2.50.

THERE is no group in this country that seems to be stultified, dazed and degraded by poverty to the extent that the poor whites of the South are. It is a phenomenon so strange in many respects that it has engaged the attention of some of our best writers, like William Faulkner, and a number of our poorer ones, Erskine Caldwell, for example. Not merely poverty explains their almost utter degradation, and so they present a stranger problem than do any other lower class group in this country. The period of reconstruction after the Civil War as well as the fact that parts of the South were originally settled by criminals offer further explanation of these people, but even then their peculiar character is not fully accounted for. It is one of the failures of our Southern writers that they have not tried to go beyond poverty and its capitalistic causes in explaining or accounting for these people.

John Faulkner, in a first novel, sheds no new light on them. What he does do is to give us an honest, objective and frequently moving portrait of them, uprooted from their cotton patches, moved into "town," and subjected to the corrupting influence of more cash than they have ever had before—the wages of a WPA common laborer. . . .

It is not easy to like or to pity these people. It is easy to hate them. They are without grace. They will buy radios, but not pay for a doctor to see their children. They are amoral. They are physically dirty, largely inconsiderate of anyone else, frequently appallingly stupid. Other Southerners do not like, understand or more than tolerate them. Compared to them, Steinbeck's Okies are bourgeois.

They are not so low as to be below the notice of petty politicians or shop-keepers willing to give them forty dollars credit on a five dollar radio. And what is to become of them I do not think anyone knows. Even the government lost interest in the less fit among them when it finally grew serious about labor for the defense program. Mr. Faulkner does not know what is to become of them either. In a book frequently funny in its own grim way, but not for the squeamish or for fond believers in the present economic system, he offers no solution. He has done them and us a service, however,

by recalling once more to mind, and often graphically, the degradation of a considerable number of Temples of the Holy Ghost. If his writing lacks the distinction of his brother William's, so does the writing of practically everyone else in this country. HARRY SYLVESTER.

Not without Honor. Vivian Parsons. Dodd. \$2.50.

WHEN Joseph LaTendresse, a rebel against the rigid paternalistic conventions of French Canada, went to the ore regions of Michigan in the eighties, he was possessed with the idea of freedom offered by America. That he found something different, a way of life among his fellow Canadians as faithfully patterned as possible after what he had left did not dismay but prompted him into shaping his career to change what he disapproved. The theme of Mrs. Parsons's novel, brilliant in many respects, is that of the great American melting pot, and she engrossingly develops it through the struggle that Joe precipitates and happily concludes—concludes despite the fact that his own people turned from him, a prophet of a new order, as a menace and a traitor.

Hilltown, the novel's locale, is supported by its mines which below ground employed Italians, the town's newer arrivals; and by a lumber mill which gave work to the Canadians. The latter, building and maintaining their church as an integral part of their traditions, lived apart, unnaturalized and clinging to the illusion that some day they would return to Quebec. They repudiated Joe because he preached and worked to eliminate just those racial barriers which they sought to preserve. For him "Canucks," looked down upon by the old settler and who in turn looked down on the Italians who followed them, and "Dagoes" were brothers in a new country, and citizenry in it was the highest good. The story of his unsuccessful efforts to persuade first the Italians to accept the privileges and responsibilities of naturalization, and later of the most difficult winning over of his own race is superbly told and rousing for all who love America.

Certain inventions of Mrs. Parsons's plot appear, however, slightly strained. The personification of Canadian opposition in Madame Desmarais is a valid device, but her motivation, never fully understood by Joe himself, is at once unclear and too dogmatically presented. The same is true in regard to the influence she exercised. Racial antagonism flamed highest in the church back to which Joe eventually led the Italians, fallen away because pride forbade their worshipping with those who so obviously did not welcome them. "Not without Honor" is a Catholic book, by its very nature, and hence it is surprising that Mrs. Parsons occasionally errs. It perhaps is a small matter that a lower "c" is used throughout for Catholic; but it is important that she represents the Church as denying the sacrament of matrimony to a man because his life expectancy is presumed to be only several years.

These flaws however are minor and the book should find many readers who will be absorbed by this account of America in the making. JOHN GILLAND BRUNINI.

WAR

They Speak for a Nation: Letters from France. Edited by Eve Curie, Philippe Barres and Raoul de Roussy de Sales. Doubleday. \$2.00.

"THE students of Paris, who are forbidden to wear anything resembling a uniform, are now flaunting over their coats wide leather belts from which hang

their bicycle pumps. In the cafes, where the occupants ostentatiously remove their military belts, the students use the same gesture to hang theirs on the rack. The air in the pumps deflates with a gay little noise." So reads a letter from a "Parisian living now in Provence" and reprinted together with many other epistles in this book. There are a few similar touches throughout the book which confirm one's faith in the deathless resilience of the French. Through the centuries they have met the invaders over and over again on their own ravaged soil. The invaders have had many names. Sometimes they have conquered France. But they have never been able to destroy her. In the end her spirit has won. France is a nation born of immense suffering repeatedly faced with courage so great that it could afford to smile.

Some of the letters published in this book remind us of this fact once more. And therein lies the only possible interest of a book which otherwise is frankly boring. A collection of letters mostly written to the BBC in London is bound to reflect more or less one point of view, and the result is very monotonous. Apparently the editors wish to furnish proofs that the French people still feel friendly toward England and long for a British victory. If so, they should provide more convincing evidence than those dull letters which, coming almost entirely through one channel, cannot be said "to speak for a nation," whether we wish it or not. Above all, it seems idle and conceited to try to show that France feels like this or like that. The present situation of France calls for a more mature attitude. CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP.

BRIEFERS

Sodom by the Sea. Oliver Pilat and Jo Ranson. Doubleday. \$3.00.

THE AUTHORS give their own sub-title: "An Affectionate History of Coney Island." That much the book is. And since their canvas is small, their 330 pages (plus illustrations) pretty well do the job up brown. Whether the job is fair or sensationalized very few people would be competent to say, since the record is by no means one of common knowledge. Perhaps a few politicians in Brooklyn or some of the cops and bartenders would be best able to judge. Certainly no one will find the volume tedious, and much that it includes is fascinating—if you have any notalgic leanings, or like to hear about how the great American public entertains itself. It deals frankly and at length with prostitution and vice.

Country Schoolma'am. Della Lutes. Little Brown. \$2.00.

THE LATEST of the country reminiscence books is a happy blending of homely detail and genuine lyricism. It embodies a beautiful and tragic love story. And it brings back in bold outline simpler days when American communities were generally kindly but truly savage toward those who had committed certain sins, when women spent a good part of their lives in the kitchen and eating played a much more important part in the lives of everyone, when political campaigns engaged everyone to the very fiber of their being.

What Mein Kampf Means to America. Francis Hackett. Reynal & Hitchcock. \$2.00.

FRANCIS HACKETT read "Mein Kampf." Good. Then he got such a mad on that he wrote a book about it. Not so good. The book about "Mein Kampf"

is unworthy of Mr. Hackett who, I think, could have written a very skillful analysis of Hitler and his ideology if he set about it. Instead, Mr. Hackett, who as a leftist-trending liberal has been mad at Hitler these long years, suddenly "discovers" what he knew all along. Hitler is a bad man, he has wrong racial theories, he is a paranoic. Mr. Hackett's fellow liberals, and a great many of us who found no balm in Marx, have been saying these things for a long time. Hackett points out, naming pages as profoundly as a theologian might name his authorities, a great deal of Hitler's beliefs and ambitions plus some of his full moon gibberish, and very righteously condemns it all as though it had never been condemned before. Undoubtedly there is a great deal of material in "Mein Kampf" that Hackett's gifted pen could have revealed to our advantage. He could have done a grand job of interpreting "Mein Kampf" in terms of its meaning to the United States. Instead, he chose to wax hysterical, to use the technique of adjective instead of reason, to project himself into the maelstrom of war propaganda. The irresponsible insinuations about Lindbergh and America First are striking. There is a complete lack of objectivity. As if to be consistent, the book is slovenly in its writing.

The Economic History of Liberia. George Brown. Associated Publishers. \$3.00.

LIBERIA was founded to ease the conscience of the slavery appeasers, and on February 6, 1820, Dr. Samuel A. Crozier headed an assembled group of "eighty-six Negroes, thirty-three men, eighteen women and thirty-five children." "The good ship *Elizabeth* weighed anchor in New York harbor and, convoyed by the United States sloop-of-war *Cayne*, put out to sea with her bow pointed to the West Coast of Africa." Thus, America fastened the only link that this country has up to the present day with the political and economic life of Africa. What of the future? Liberia is poor, its climate beastly, its people almost forgot, except for the descendants of American-Liberians who run the political machinery—and who practice every evil of petty political life that petty states offer. What of the future? Is it akin to Dakar, is military occupation likely in view of the fact that the Firestone Corporation actually runs the show? Some say yes, many more say so. However, Liberia is US in Africa, and its leaders are the grandchildren of American-born. All this Dr. Brown makes it pretty hard to grasp, inasmuch as this book suffers from too many pages, too many references to magazine material and too much praise of wordy Liberian politicians.

GEORGE STREATOR.

Case Studies of Consumers' Cooperatives. H. Haines Turner. Columbia. \$2.50.

NOT as detailed, specific or exhaustive as the study on the North Central States recently brought out by the University of Minnesota Press, this competent volume is a real addition to the growing library on consumers' cooperation. Besides his midwest studies the author also devotes more than 100 pages to the cooperative enterprises founded by the Finns in Maynard, Mass. He is evidently a believer in the movement, if not an uncritical one, although he scarcely explains his enthusiasm beyond signaling such achievements as the 5 to 10 percent savings in food distribution to consumers over chain and independent stores respectively. But then, generally speaking, coops in the United States have yet to attain the stature of a movement.

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The Inner Forum

DOCUMENTS of Cardinal Hlond, Primate of Poland, recently handed to Pope Pius XII, bring the story of nazi persecution of the Church in Poland up to January, 1941. The statistics show that up to that time 700 Polish priests had been killed. A broadcast of July 19 by the Reverend Martin D'Arcy, S.J., cited the following from a report submitted by Cardinal Hlond to the Vatican: "It goes without saying that the nazi aim is to dechristianize as rapidly as possible these countries which are attached to the Catholic faith, and the results are as follows: 95 percent of the priests have been imprisoned, expelled or humiliated before the eyes of the faithful. . . the thousands of churches in Poland, second homes for old and young from morning to sunset ever since the nation was born and baptised in the Catholic faith, are deserted and closed for six and a half days of the week, separating an afflicted people from the altar of its hopes and sacrifices. . ."

A special correspondent of the *Catholic Herald* of London tells of the first Ghetto Catholic Church to be opened in Warsaw. This apparently is to take care of those who are Catholics but are considered Jews by the German authorities because of their ancestry. This report also tells how the Germans on entering Paris raided the headquarters of the Congregation of Notre Dame de Sion, an order of priests who exercise a special apostolate for the conversion of the Jews.

This report goes on to say, "Because the nazi authorities have forbidden the saying of Mass in certain parts of Poland, Catholics in those places assemble secretly after midnight and participate in the Holy Sacrifice in the basements of houses and even in caves, report Polish refugees in Lisbon. By their magnificent display of courage and devotion to their people, these refugees say, Catholic priests in Poland are not only bolstering the morale of Catholics but are being looked upon as natural leaders by Protestants and Jews. In the exercise of Christian charity Catholic priests in Poland are making real and successful efforts to aid the Jews in that country."

The London *Tablet* reports that many of the leading Catholic papers in Czechoslovakia have been suppressed. The most important of these, the Catholic weekly *Nedele*, had a circulation of over 180,000 readers and it was the only Czech paper allowed in Germany before the occupation. Although entirely non-political it was one of the first to be suppressed. On the other hand, "The occupying nazi authorities in deference to popular feeling paid tribute to Cardinal Kaspar, Archbishop of Prague, when he died."

CONTRIBUTORS

Jean WEILLER has recently arrived from France to continue research in international politics and law.

Donald ATTWATER sends another of his contributions from Wales.

Rev. Daniel M. CANTWELL is a priest of the archdiocese of Chicago.

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Claire Huchet BISHOP was born in France and now lives in Pennsylvania.